

Editor's Note

It is a great privilege to follow in the footsteps of the four previous editors of *The Contemporary Pacific*, and a pleasure to note that two of these distinguished individuals have articles in this issue. Founding editor Brij V Lal's poignant contribution calls attention to the human costs of political instability in Fiji over the last two decades, the approximate life span of the journal. Lal underlines the fundamental importance of the regional issues we seek to understand and represent through scholarly analysis, dialogue essays, artwork, annual political reviews, as well as book and media reviews. David Hanlon's essay, on the other hand, reminds us of the work remaining to be done. As he points out, Micronesia has not been particularly well represented in the broader field of Pacific studies, or in the pages of this journal. Hanlon, who served as editor after Lal, calls for regional studies that are inclusive, critical, and comparative; that counter colonial representations; and that open space for local voices, perspectives, and epistemologies. This matches well the goals and aspirations that will guide my work as editor.

The continuing relevance of more than forty issues of the journal is apparent in Pacific-related references and bibliographies, as well as the increasing number of electronic "hits" our articles receive via Project MUSE. It is a tribute to the vision of former editors that *The Contemporary Pacific* has moved to embrace and encourage new developments in the field of Pacific studies since the journal first appeared in 1989. During his term as editor (1999–2002), Geoffrey White continued David Hanlon's commitment to creative and empowering forms of scholarship, widening the composition of the editorial board as well as actively soliciting work from indigenous scholars. It is gratifying to note that in the lead article in this issue, Sa'iliemanu Lilomaiaava-Doktor discusses population movement and Samoan epistemology—a topic that would not have attracted much attention not so long ago. When he took control in 2002, Vilsoni Here-niko promised to make the journal more contemporary and more inter-

disciplinary. He has achieved both those objectives. In early 2003 the first issue to showcase contemporary Pacific art made its dramatic debut, featuring the work of Niuean artist John Pule. Since then more than a dozen artists from across the region have graced the cover and inside pages of the journal, a powerful reminder of the salience of visual expression in Oceania. This is richly illustrated by Katherine Higgins in her article about the Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture elsewhere in the current issue. It is also worth noting that Brij Lal's dialogue piece addresses Pacific concerns through creative writing, a first for the journal and another legacy of Hereniko's emphasis on diversity and accessibility.

My first duty as editor is to uphold the remarkable reputation for excellence surrounding this publication. *The Contemporary Pacific* is second to none in its rigorous peer review process, and the quality of its editorial and production practices. Institutional factors account for some of this success. The journal is an initiative of the Center for Pacific Islands Studies at the University of Hawai'i, which provides a stable environment, permanent facilities, and material support. It also benefits from the production and marketing expertise of the University of Hawai'i Press, which publishes sixteen other scholarly journals. Most important to the journal's success, however, is the remarkable team of dedicated individuals who support its day-to-day operations.

Decisions on manuscripts are made by a nineteen-member editorial board, drawn mostly from the Center for Pacific Islands Studies, its affiliate faculty, and the East-West Center. Pacific librarian Karen Peacock continues to manage the Resources section of the journal to great effect, while Julie Walsh Kroeker edits a book and media review section that is the envy of other journals. The position of Political Reviews Editor, which I held for two decades, is now in the capable hands of Scott Kroeker of the East-West Center's Pacific Islands Development Program. A new board position, Arts Editor, will soon be filled by Carl Ka'ailā'au Pao, who teaches art at Kamehameha Schools, and who was the featured artist in volume 20, issue 1 (2008). However, by far the heaviest burden falls on Managing Editor Jan Rensel, now entering her eighth year with the Center for Pacific Islands Studies. Juggling many other publications-related responsibilities, Jan provides the professional expertise, experience, and attention to detail that constitute the backbone of the journal's operation.

As incoming editor, I have no plans to alter the basic structure of the journal. In my view, some of the most effective past issues have achieved

an appropriate balance between main articles, innovative or provocative dialogue pieces, and essays that feature bibliographic and other useful resources. The political reviews continue to provide a unique annual record of issues and events in the nations and territories of this vast region, and are among the most popular items available on the Pacific Islands Report news Web site. The books and media reviews section now covers a wide range of Pacific-related materials published, broadcast, exhibited, or performed. I am especially interested in submissions that cross disciplinary boundaries, are innovative in their approach to scholarship, and privilege Pacific voices, perspectives, and ways of knowing and living in the world. I also welcome proposals for special issues of *The Contemporary Pacific* that offer comprehensive coverage of important themes or issues with regional relevance.

I am committed to broadening access to the journal where possible, especially via the Internet. Beginning with volume 12 (2000), *The Contemporary Pacific* has been available in electronic format at institutions that subscribe to Project MUSE, a major collaboration between publishers and libraries based at Johns Hopkins University. This has had an enormous impact on our operations, significantly expanding readership as well as revenues. Like many other academic journals, most readers now access the electronic rather than the print version of *The Contemporary Pacific*. However, this is not the case for important segments of our target audience, especially those in the Pacific Islands, who are not affiliated with institutions where MUSE is available. Indeed, there is not a single MUSE subscriber in the Pacific Islands, and only a few in Australia and New Zealand. To address some of these access issues, we plan to make use of the University of Hawai'i's online ScholarSpace facility. Employing DSpace software, ScholarSpace hosts digital materials organized in communities and available free of charge to anyone with access to the Internet. Work is already underway digitizing volumes 1 through 11 (1989–1999) of the journal so that this material can be made available online via ScholarSpace. Subsequent issues of the journal are already in digital form and will also be posted on the site as soon as possible. The only exceptions are issues that are less than one year old, which will continue to be available in electronic format only via Project MUSE. I hope that with initiatives like this we can continue to combat the emerging digital divide in journal readership.

TERENCE WESLEY-SMITH